

## **The Tribal College Librarians Institute: Building Bridges to Learning and New Professionals Strengthening Tribal College Library Capacity to Serve as a Community Anchor**

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The Montana State University (MSU) Library, in partnership with the University of Texas (UT)-Austin's School of Information and the University of Washington (UW)'s iSchool, seek a \$249,654 Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program Planning Grant under the Community Anchors project category to support the Tribal College Librarians Institute (TCLI), an annual, weeklong professional development program for tribal college librarians and archivists that provides continuing education programming across all areas of librarianship and is tailored to the unique needs of tribal college librarians, helping them to develop the critical skills their communities will need to be successful in the 21st century.

TCLI's third decade of professional development will include multi-pronged efforts to fulfill the diverse professional, cultural, and leadership needs of tribal college library personnel in order that they may better serve their communities' needs and be recognized and valued as community anchors.

### **Statement of Broad Need:**

Tribal college libraries serve as both academic and public libraries in their respective communities. Most of these communities are on rural, geographically-isolated reservations with high unemployment rates among traditionally underserved Native peoples. These communities also typically struggle with digital access, with the tribal college library often being the only public location for computer, internet, and telephone access. Tribal college libraries are thus integral to the information needs of the entire tribal community, and serve as community anchors for the academic and general information needs of the entire community. While serving the academic needs of the tribal college, tribal college libraries also provide after-school and summer reading programs, computer skills training, job seeking assistance, and community programming—such as the sharing of intergenerational cultural knowledge. In short, tribal college libraries, and, more specifically, tribal college librarians and staff, are key to community-building through their diverse educational and outreach efforts. Therefore, ongoing professional development and leadership skill-building is thus critical to tribal college library personnel in serving the diverse needs of their communities.

### **Project Design:**

During the three-year project, TCLI will collaborate with UW and UT-Austin iSchool faculty to provide targeted programming to enhance the leadership skills of tribal college librarians, while also familiarizing iSchool graduate students about this niche area of librarianship. Project goals include the following:

- Providing ongoing continuing education throughout the year, in addition to the annual TCLI gathering, to include at least four targeted webinars on knowledge and skills presented by experts in the field, as well as best practices and burning issues, presented by tribal college librarians to their colleagues. Recordings will be archived in a TCLI YouTube channel as part of a TCLI professional development digital content archive and remain available in perpetuity.
- Targeting library services and programming to veterans, their families, and the greater community by including programming around suicide, domestic abuse, addiction, and other well-being topics. Expert speakers will also be invited to present on programming for veterans, as well as tribal college librarians' best practices in serving veterans in their communities through partnerships with local law enforcement, public health agencies, and other similar entities. Additionally, the National Network of Libraries of Medicine will share National Library of Medicine resources for veterans at least one TCLI gathering.

- Partnering one or more graduate Library and Information Science (LIS) student(s) each year with tribal college librarians to create tutorials, pathfinders, or other relevant educational materials targeted at specific tribal college communities. These student-librarian partners would co-present on their projects at the TCLI annual gathering, and their products would be archived in a digital Indigenous Libraries Archive to be tapped by all and serve as a testing ground to create the first truly indigenous space in this area—a continuation of TCLI’s success in pairing [Dr. Roy’s](#) LIS students with institutions nation-wide.
- Partnering one or more LIS student(s) each of the three years to create a training manual on continuing education for tribal college librarians that can be customized for each institution. These efforts will also familiarize LIS students with the niche area of tribal college librarianship. The training manual will include content on topics such as technology use and application and other areas the students are focusing on in their programs of study.
- Partnering one or more LIS student(s) each of the three years with tribal college librarians to create a draft protocol document for access and care of indigenous knowledge that potentially has national application. These efforts will contribute to [ALA’s Rural, Native, and Tribal Libraries of All Kinds](#) efforts, as well as build upon [Sandy Littletree’s](#) work at UW iSchool.
- Collaborating with tribal college librarians to create a National Reading Club for Native children during summer reading programs as well as after-school reading programs at tribal college libraries to connect Native children to other Native children across tribal communities by extending existing summer reading programs into a national reading network possibly via a blog.

TCLI participants will complete an annual evaluation, providing feedback on the achievement of these goals each year.

**Diversity Plan:**

TCLI has a 28-year history of improving the library profession’s depth of diversity by recruiting Native students to pursue LIS degrees, and by providing professional development and training to tribal college library personnel that empowers them to better meet the changing needs of their tribal communities. TCLI activities supported by IMLS funding will focus on helping to educate the next generation of librarians while developing library leaders who are community anchors. TCLI coordinators will partner with [the MSU Cultural Attunement Advisory Group](#) to share TCLI diversity efforts across campus and learn about other diversity efforts that might be brought back to TCLI gatherings.

**Broad Impact:**

Funding for carrying TCLI into its third decade will result in enhanced skills and knowledge among tribal college librarians in their Community Anchor roles in serving the academic and community information needs of their tribal populations; plus deeper connections among tribal college librarians. Additionally, LIS students will increase their professional knowledge and skills while also learning about this niche area of librarianship, potentially pursuing it as their own career path, and partnerships with iSchools will be enhanced.

**Budget Summary:**

Anticipated project costs are \$249,654. Funds will be allocated as follows: \$180,000 will be allocated towards participant support to attend each TCLI; \$18,750 in salary support and \$6,938 in fringe benefits for administrative work related to conference registration, travel arrangements, reimbursements, etc.; \$11,100 for required/recruitment travel; \$6,000 for supplies/materials/equipment; \$9,000 for consultant fees; and \$17,867 in indirect costs.